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SUBJECT: BABIL TRIBAL SUPPORT COUNCIL MOVING AHEAD

REF: HILLAH 79

CLASSIFIED BY: Kenneth M. hillas, PRT Leader, Babil PRT, Dept of State.  
REASON: 1.4 (b)

¶1. (C) On September 18, Sheikh Ali Shannan Sheik Salah Khashif al-Gettah, who chaired the 11 September founding Congress of the Babil Tribal Support Council (TSC), told the PRT that they are pressing forward with the TSC initiative in Babil and would focus on political reconciliation, including with OMS. They expect PM Al-Maliki to push ahead with the TSC initiative, despite ISCI opposition. In response, Governor Salim's brother, Sheik Na'ama al Muslimawi, has been coopted to serve as acting TSC Deputy Chief of the Kifl Council, which is headed by Sheik Ali Shanan. Both Sheik Ali Shanan and Sheik Salah kashif al-Gettah view the TSC as providing an opportunity for the tribes to resume a role in the province's life after the setbacks of the Ba'athist era.

¶2. (C) Issues of concern to these Sheikhs centered on a law providing a legal basis for the TSCs, on the composition of the councils and on the role the TSCs are to play in each province in supporting the security forces. Shiekh Ali Shinan said that Babil Governor Salim, although publicly opposed to the TSC, had asked for the addition of 35 tribal leaders to the council, of which 25 were already members. The TSC agreed to include an additional five from smaller tribes to "show respect for the Governor." According to Sheikh Ali, Provincial Director of Police BG Fadhil Raddad has been instructed by the Ministry of Interior (MOI) to cooperate with the TSC. The sheikhs have also met with General Abd al-Ameer, Babil's Iraqi Army commander, who welcomed the establishment of the TSC. Even the Provincial Council Chair, Mohammed al-Massoudi reportedly responded positively in a recent meeting with the TSC leadership. The sheikh's said they were cooperating with the ISF and would continue to do so.

¶3. (C) On the issue of reconciliation, Sheikh Ali ascribed ISCI opposition to its belief that the TSC "are owned by the PM," because the idea came from al-Maliki. The sheikhs faulted ISCI for its focus on building mosques when the public needs essential services. Both sheikh's, however, were insistent that they planned to remain politically independent of all political parties. (Comment: They are likely to follow the money.) They pointed out that ISCI members were a part of the TSC and that it would not become

partisan.

¶4. (C) Sheikh Ali Shanan said that when local councils (17) are established, one of the tasks at the local level will be to invite the Sadrists to meet to develop ideas for reconciliation, consistent with the PM's efforts. He also stressed that Sunni tribes in North Babil are represented in the TSC provincial leadership.

¶5. (U) The Founding Congress reportedly has asked the PM's office that 17 local councils be expanded from 20 to 25 members on each. The provincial TSC has rented four houses in al-Hillah for the its headquarters. The election of TSC Chief is to be held soon, but no date was given. The permanent Chief of the Babil TSC is to be chosen from among the heads of the 17 councils, giving Sheik Ali Shanan a good chance of being elected.

HILLAS